JUNE 29–JULY 5 2018 | VOLUME [illegible] NUMBER [illegible]

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JUNE 28 – JULY 1

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inside » 06/29-07/05 » 2018

VOLUME 23 | NUMBER 44 » OCWEEKLY.COM

CHRIS VICTORIO

up front

The County

08 | MOXLEY CONFIDENTIAL | Alleged DC cannibal faces justice By R. Scott Moxley

07 | DANA WATCH | Our very own anti-pride congressman. By Matt Coker

07 | POLITICAL FUTBOL | Panama vs. Tunisia By Steve Lowery

Feature

05 | NEWS | Looking back at the death of a friend By Anthony Pignataro

12 | PHOTO ESSAY | Celebrating 29 years of OC Pride By Aimee Murillo, photos by Roger Santana

in back

Calendar

15 | EVENTS | Things to do while watching America's favorite team, Mexico, win the World Cup.

Food

18 | REVIEW | Grandpa's Kitchen serves a noodle-licious, soup-free pho By Edwin Goei

18 | WHAT THE ALE | Estrella Jalisco Golden Road Mango Michalada By Greg Nagel

20 | LONG BEACH LUNCH | Beach City Food Tours shows off downtown Long Beach's food scene By Sarah Bennett

21 | EAT & DRINK THIS NOW | El Mercado's new cocktail menu—plus pairings By Greg Nagel

Film

22 | REVIEW | *Iggy Gets the Fuck Across Town* is an inventive indie By Matt Coker

23 | SPECIAL SCREENINGS | Compiled by Matt Coker

Culture

24 | THEATER | Costa Mesa Playhouse's new artistic director tackles Big Religion By Joel Beers

24 | ARTS OVERLOAD | Compiled by Aimee Murillo

Music

26 | ESSAY | *OC Weekly*'s former executive editor and a Newport Beach collector revisit country music's flashiest era. By Nate Jackson

27 | PROFILE | Blu's new album charts the rapper's ongoing fight against demons inner and outer By M.T. Richards

28 | CONCERT GUIDE | Compiled by Nate Jackson

also

05 | HEY, YOU! | Contain your K-9. By Anonymous

29 | SAVAGE LOVE | By Dan Savage

31 | TOKE OF THE WEEK | Agua De Flor's Mango Agua Fresca. By Mary Carreon

38 | YESTERNOW | Dita von Teese is still Orange County's favorite pin-up By Taylor Hamby

on the cover

Photo by Roger Santana
Design by Richie Beckman

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Contain Your K-9

You and your husband, who is a cop, constantly walk your foaming-at-the-mouth attack dogs without leashes in violation of a city ordinance. I understand you don't care that your mutts continuously race up to me and try to bite my legs while I'm carrying grocery bags. You think the encounters are funny, as you insist that the dogs' growling and snapping are innocent play. How about this idea for innocent play? I fire high-powered Taser darts into these animals you proudly call your "kids"? Now *that* really would be funny and deserving.

HEY, YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey You!" c/o *OC Weekly*, 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com.

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RED MEAT
salivary stock for septic stew
from the secret files of Max Cannon
Hey Matt, glad I caught you. I haven't been getting my subscription of "Panel & Vernon World" magazine for the last few months, so I called the publisher and they told me they've been mailing it out
So what makes you think I know anything about it?
For starters, I couldn't help but notice those handsome faux-woodgrain lens pieces that you've been wearing lately
You got me, Johnson. I have a problem. How about I give your magazines back to you and we pretend this never happened?
It's a deal, Say. If you'd like, I have some pretty explicit "how-to" Spanish calligraphy videos that you can borrow

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One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Court okays death for man who allegedly cannibalized 12-year-old OC boy

The Supreme Court of California affirmed a death-penalty punishment for a one-armed amputee and immigrant, who fled Egypt on religious-persecution grounds and suffered severe mental illness including regular hallucinations, because he molested, murdered, dismembered and may have cannibalized a 12-year-old boy in La Habra in 1998.

Joho Samuel Ghobrial, an unemployed panhandler who served in the Egyptian army and lived in a backyard residential shack, now officially becomes Orange County's 72nd defendant on San Quentin State Prison's death row.

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»R. SCOTT MOXLEY

Though Ghobrial, repeatedly chained and beaten as a kid, was known to defecate on rooftops, mutilate himself, hear imaginary voices telling him to do violence, push a loaded shopping cart down Imperial Highway, utter hyper-talkative ramblings, pull out his own hair and toenails, cover his face with butter and coffee, and had publicly threatened to eat his sixth-grade victim's penis prior to the murder of Juan Delgado, the court rejected a defense argument that an Orange County Superior Court judge wrongly failed to conduct a mental-competency hearing.

The court ruled on June 21, "Although the defense counsel's penalty phase mitigation evidence showed that the defendant suffered from serious mental illness, we conclude that the mitigating evidence did ont constitute substantial evidence of present incompetence that required the trial court, on its own motion, to declare doubt and conduct a competence hearing."

The judges also didn't accept a defense contention that while Ghobrial was the killer, there was insufficient evidence of a premediated murder.

"The defense stresses that the prosecution never presented evidence of extensive planning," the court opined. "The jury was, however, entitled to consider evidence showing that [Ghobrial] had previously threatened to kill Delgado in considering whether the murder was premeditated. [A witness] testified that Delgado approached him outside a liquor store and told him that the defendant was going to kill him, and he later heard [Ghobrial] tell Delgado, 'I will kill you and eat your pee-pee.' The jury further heard evidence that when Delgado's remains were found, his penis was missing."

(A police search of his shed located a saw, scissors, knife, body cleaver, bolt cutters, a capping tool, tin snips and latex gloves plus Delgado's school work, shoes and clothes.)

Finally, the court rejected a defense claim that the trial judge wrongly blocked potential testimony that would have purportedly shown "that the victim often sought out the companionship of adult men" while hanging around stores late at night.

The judges wrote, "The trial court excluded the testimony, concluding that any evidence describing Delgado's general interactions with customers and employees at local businesses was irrelevant because such evidence had on tendency to prove or disprove that [Ghobrial, now 48 years old] molested Delgado."

DRIVER FORCED TO SOIL HERSELF

The U.S. District Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that a California Highway Patrol (CHP) officer didn't violate a female driver's constitutional rights by detaining her from a restroom while she suffered from severe diarrhea, a move that caused, well, a mess.

In June 2014, successful San Diego businesswoman Toni Antonellis had been driving from Ventura County through Orange County on the way home when she felt the onslaught of impending, painful diarrhea and broke out in a sweat.

Typical heavy mid-morning Southern California traffic stalled her ability to exit the freeway near El Toro Road, and so she twice impermissibly crossed over double-yellow lines for the HOV lane, catching the attention of Aaron Rothberg, a CHP officer.

In her federal lawsuit, Antonellis claimed Rothberg, a onetime bodyguard for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, violated her Fourth Amendment protection against excessive force plus committed battery under state law by instigating a stop, ignoring her desperate pleas to use a restroom, handcuffing her for nine minutes, treating her obnoxiously and causing a delay that ended with her soiling herself in the backseat of a CHP cruiser.

U.S. District Court Judge James V. Selna, an appointee of President George W. Bush, blocked a potential future jury from considering Antonellis' complaint by handing Rothberg a summary judgment ruling.

In their terse, two-page opinion on June 22, a Ninth Circuit panel of three judges—Mark Bennett (backed by Donald Trump), Morgan Christen (backed by Sarah Palin and Barack Obama) and Ferdinand Fernandez (backed by George H.W. Bush and Ronald Reagan)—claimed that "no reasonable" jury would have sided with Antonellis.

They affirmed Selna's decision.

RICHIE BECKMAN

THE DANA, DONNY & TONY SHOWS

Officials at the Orange County Registrar of Voters agency recently issued final vote tallies for the June 5 election and Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-Costa Mesa) learned that, though he topped the field of 48th District candidates, he's not the darling he imagines. A whopping 70 percent of voters wanted someone else to win. Now, he has to face challenger Harley Rouda of Laguna Beach in the November election. Keep in mind that the coastal district was gerrymandered eight years ago to give Rohrabacher a safe seat. But perhaps local residents have tired of a career politician who is now seeking his 31st and 32nd years in office with few accomplishments.

The races for district attorney and sheriff-coroner also ended with surprises. Neither incumbent DA Tony Rackauckas nor Don Barnes, who hopes to jump from undersheriff to the top spot, managed to win 50 percent of the vote plus 1 in order to avoid run-offs. Duke Nguyen made a surprisingly strong showing against Barnes, who is essentially running as a mirror image of Sandra Hutchens, the outgoing sheriff. Hutchens' era at the Orange County Sheriff's Department created an encyclopedia of incompetence and corruption.

But the most likely heated contest will be Rackauckas' effort to outlast his challenger and longtime nemesis, Supervisor Todd Spitzer, a former prosecutor. The two men loathe each other, and many observers believe that the 75-year-old DA wants a sixth, four-year term just to keep Spitzer from the job he's craved. Like Barnes, Rackauckas will defend the status quo as hunky-dory while relishing an ugly fact about local voters: Too many remain ignorant about the current DA's chronic ethical lapses and aversion to honesty.

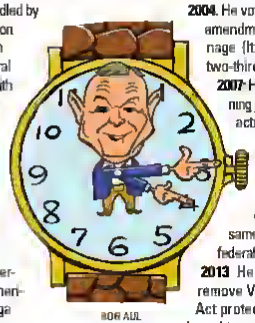
RSCOTTMOXLEY@OCWEEKLY.COM

The Anti-Pride Candidate

» MATT COKER

On June 13, which was eight days after he received more votes than any other candidate in the 48th Congressional District primary election race, Representative Dana Rohrabacher (R-Putin's ballot box) drew a crowd to Laguna Beach.

But the 40 or so people huddled by the Main Beach lifeguard station were not there to cheer him on to victory in November's general election. Most carried signs with messages such as these: "OC rejects Rohrabacher bigotry," "Not my values, not my representative" and "Dana, stand up for your district, not for discrimination."



BOB AUL

Demonstrators had been invited by activists from ACLU-OC, Indivisible OC48, Orange Coast Unitarian Universalist Church, Women for American Values and Ethics, Orange County Equality Coalition, Orange County Young Democrats, Organizing for Action-California, SoCal Healthcare Coalition, and HB Huddle. All were horrified by Rohrabacher having told Orange County Realtors in May that home sellers should be able to reject offers based on a potential buyer's "lifestyle." That lost his campaign financial support from the National Association of Realtors.

However, it's not really surprising when you consider the votes he has cast since joining Congress in 1989. For instance:

1993: He voted against the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy.
1995: He voted *for* Don't Ask Don't Tell, now arguing it should be up to the president and his advisers to decide who can and cannot serve.
1996: He voted to ban federal recognition of same-sex marriages and authorize states to do the same.
2004: He voted for a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage. (It failed to get the required two-thirds majority to pass.)
2007: He voted against one bill banning job discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and another expanding the federal hate-crime law.
2011: He voted for the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which prohibited same-sex couples from receiving federal benefits.
2013: He voted for separate bills to remove Violence Against Women Act protections for LGBT individuals and to continue funding the legal defense of the DOMA.
2015: He voted for the second time against repealing Don't Ask Don't Tell.
2016: He voted, in multiple bills, to allow discrimination of LGBT individuals by religious groups; Washington, D.C., private schools, and federal contractors and subcontractors.

Got Dana Watch fodder?
Email mcoker@ocweekly.com

Political Fútbol

» STEVE LOWERY

Panama vs. Tunisia

PANAMA UPDATE: Nearly seven years ago to the day, Donald Trump stood at a podium in Panama City on the occasion of the opening of his Ocean Club condo complex and thanked Panamanian President Ricardo Martinelli. "You're my friend," Trump said, and as we know, that is an exclusive group limited to G-list celebrities, homicidal dictators, the staff of *Fox and Friends*, any "models" who may currently be experiencing visa problems, and fellas such as Martinelli, who allegedly helped embezzle $45 million from a government school-lunch program to use public funds to spy on more than 150 political opponents. Martinelli claims all of this is part of a government "vendetta," you know, a witch-hunt—you've heard of those, right? There are so many similarities between Trump and Martinelli that it's like they share the same brain; I'm told Trump gets it on alternating weekends.
TUNISIA UPDATE: Tunisia is the kind of country Americans love to exoticize. It's small, with about 11 million people; it's old (its previous address was Carthage); and—wait for it—it's in Africa! Yes, it's one of those countries we love to patronize while saying it really makes you appreciate our own country. After all, what does Tunisia have that we don't? What's that? One of the lowest rates of corruption in the world? Well, now, that doesn't sound very friendly. It also has a healthy trade relationship with the rest of the world, devoid of tariffs? Incredibly, it also has a friendly relationship with So-Much-Worse-Than-North-Korea Canada, with whom they are preparing to sign a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement to establish an equal strategic partnership in things such as modern technologies, scientific research and artificial intelligence, the latter being what happens every other weekend at the White House.
CONSENSUS: Martinelli fled prosecution in Panama and wound up in a luxury waterfront condo in Miami. Funny, the whole time Trump was going on and on about the criminal immigrant element—M-13 thugs and Mexican rapists that—he didn't once mention his dirty little friend who had fleeced kids out of lunch and who was facing 20 other corruption charges. That's right, 20 corruption charges, or as the Mueller investigation folks call it, "The shit we found out Tuesday." With friends like that, we're rooting for Tunisia.

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FRIDAY JULY 6

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SUNDAY JULY 29

FUTURE EVENTS

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RIPPLES IN THE UNIVERSE

FOR 30 YEARS, I THOUGHT MY BEST FRIEND IN HIGH SCHOOL HAD DIED IN AN ACCIDENT. THEN I LOOKED AT HIS DEATH CERTIFICATE

BY ANTHONY PIGNATARO

We met in the second grade. My first memory of R (for the sake of his family, I'll just call him that) was of my irritating him in a little-kid way. I was standing behind him in line. We were always standing in line in elementary school, and it was insanely boring. At some point, I noticed the top edge of his belt had curled outward, so I started pulling at it. Every few seconds, he would turn around and say, "Quit it," but when he resumed facing forward, I'd do it again.

I have no memory of how we actually became friends.

Born in India, R and his family moved to Whittier, where I grew up, in the late 1970s. Like his parents and his two older brothers, R was very intelligent. So much so that he'd been jumped up a grade when he entered our school district, which meant he was about 6 when we met, while I was 7. We became best friends that year, and we stayed that way right up to his death, which happened during our junior year of high school.

We were nerds. We both read a lot, but he especially loved fantasy novels by authors such as J.R.R. Tolkien and Lloyd Alexander, as well as British comic books such as *Asterix* and *Tintin*. We rode our bikes everywhere, even in high school, we rode our bikes together to school right up to his death.

As kids, we played T-ball in the summer and sucked at it. We also played Atari video games until our hands cramped; *Pitfall*, *Breakout* and *Indiana Jones* were our favorites, the latter of which posed special problems because it was so damn difficult. At one point in this pre-internet era, one of R's brothers somehow found a list of hints on how to finish the game and shared them with us.

I still recall the night he died. I was enrolled in a night class in contemporary art at the local community college with two other friends because we didn't want to take ceramics at our high school. Around 7:30 p.m., the lights went out in the room. They were on an automated switch, which got confused when no one was moving; the lights came back on a few moments later. After I heard the news, I did a little math in my head and decided that 7:30 p.m. was as good a time as any to mark the moment R died.

When I got home that night after class, my mom came downstairs and asked if I knew where R was. Home, I figured. I called his parents, but I had nothing helpful to offer. In the middle of the night, the police showed up. "Did he have any enemies?" one cop asked me. Groggy, I shook my head. "Not that I can think of," I said.

I was in newspaper class the next day when I finally heard what happened. It was near the end of the period, and I noticed our American history teacher talking to our newspaper adviser at the doorway. When the guy in front of me pointed out my history teacher was crying, I got up and walked over to them.

"What happened?" I asked, though I remember already knowing the answer. Through tears, my history teacher said that a few hours ago, the police had found R's body at the bottom of the San Gabriel river bed. He had apparently fallen sometime the previous night while out jogging.

That was in the spring of 1989. For the past three decades, I've held onto that story. Random shit happens, I told myself. His death was sad, horrible, but it was also oddly comforting: There was nothing anyone could have done to prevent it.

That story, I found out very recently, isn't true. A few weeks ago, my sister asked me if I knew the truth about R's death. She said she had recently become curious about his death and obtained a copy of his death certificate from the Los Angeles County Recorder's office. Of course, I asked if she could email me a copy.

Normally just one page, R's death certificate had two. The first page, dated March 10, 1989, one day after police had found R's body, was what I was used to seeing, except the word *Deferred* had been typed into the cause-of-death section. The second page was a form titled "Amendment of Medical and Health Section Data—Death." The coroner had signed this document on April 27, 1989—more than six weeks after R's death and long after his funeral.

Glancing over the amended certificate, my eyes kept zeroing in on certain words, including *pills* and *suicide*. Though R had apparently sustained a leg fracture in his fall from the bridge, the coroner had concluded that the "immediate cause of death" had been from an overdose of a drug used to treat irregular heartbeat.

It's difficult to put into words exactly what has happened since then. A wound I thought had closed nearly 30 years ago was now very much open. Though I'm a completely different person—probably the age of his parents back then—it was as though I was 16 again. His death, long a distant memory, now stung every bit as it had in 1989.

When I first read R's death certificate, news of the suicides of first Kate Spade, then Anthony Bourdain dominated my thoughts. At the same time, the Centers for Disease Control reported that suicide rates have been rising in every state over the past two decades.

I began making notes, writing down anything I could remember about R's demeanor and actions. I blew the dust off anything I recalled that included R. I also began reaching out to people—some who had known, others who hadn't. I wanted to vent, vomit out a lifetime's worth of questions, but at the same time, I was cautious, especially when chatting with those who had known R. Just because I was reliving a death I thought 30 years in the past, there was no reason I had to subject others to the same pain.

Still, the urge to talk with people such as my high school newspaper adviser—who also taught AP English to R and me—was overwhelming. Since we corresponded occasionally on Facebook, I sent him a brief message asking if we could talk about R's death. He quickly accepted.

"He was such a sweet kid, and he was always engaged in class," he told me. "I avoided thoughts on sui-

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

RIPPLES IN THE UNIVERSE

» FROM PAGE 9

cide because he never seemed troubled to me."

That was the thing: R never seemed troubled to me, either. I mean, not at all. He seemed solid, stable, the kind of student the rest of us relied on. I never saw or even imagined him using drugs or drinking alcohol. He was polite, thoughtful and studious.

R had a sense of honor, even when we were little kids. When some new kid came to school, he made a deliberate effort to befriend him or her. R went out of his way to be nice to kids who were being picked on.

Both of us had been picked on in elementary and junior high. We were smart kids who liked school; plus, I was a skinny kid who hated sports, and he had dark skin. I remember kids in elementary school even called him the N-word once, which astonished me.

I remember him telling me he wanted to be a doctor. He could have done it. He was a very serious student, always maintaining a 4.0 GPA, he participated in activities and went out for sports. He wasn't a great athlete, but he consistently ran track and cross-country.

Even as a child, R was politically aware, though at first that was probably just a reflection of his parents. They were very liberal, as was he. At the time, I was rather conservative, again reflecting my parents. Though we were ideologically different, we didn't really argue about politics.

The notion that he faced pressure at home to succeed sticks in my mind. Everyone in his family succeeded in life. His father was an engineer, and his mother was a history professor. His brothers were also excellent students. His oldest brother became a doctor, while the other became an engineer.

At the time R died, he and I shared a few classes: AP U.S. history, chemistry and AP English, where we agonized over *Huck Finn*, *Invisible Man* and T.S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men." But at the same time, he was also excelling in math analysis (a class typically packed with seniors), while I was treading water in Algebra 2.

Sometime in our junior year, I recall R missing a week or even two of school, which was odd. My memory is that he had the flu, then a relapse, but now I find myself questioning whether that was true.

I did not talk with R's parents after seeing the death certificate. Though they clearly have far more information than I do, they are also old and, even now, don't want to talk about R. I can't honestly imagine what they've gone through, what they still go through, and I have no wish to add to their pain.

R's funeral was at Rose Hills, an immense cemetery in Whittier. A bunch of us just left school to go to it. I remember R's parents hooked one of

the larger chapels, and we easily filled it. Many of our mutual friends spoke, but I didn't. I just didn't have the words. After that, we all filed into the room for the viewing of his body. It was open casket. R looked completely lifelike, as if he were merely asleep. There were at least a dozen of us in there, but no one said a word.

R's death was by far the most important event in my life before I turned 18. I've often looked back and wondered how things would have turned out had he lived. For a while after his death, I obsessively checked the *Los Angeles Times* obit section, looking for the names of other friends. My senior year in high school wasn't great, and my first two years in college were ghastly. It took USC asking me to leave after just 18 months to snap me back into the realities of college life. That I managed to graduate from UC Santa Barbara with a bachelor's degree in political science a mere five years after leaving high school still amazes me.

Looking back now, I find myself fixated on R's age. I never thought about it in school, but now it seems horrendous. He was always a year younger than his classmates and friends. This wasn't so bad in elementary school, but I can't imagine it was easy in high school, especially in a class such as math analysis. R was 15 when he took that class, with virtually everyone else being at least 17.

I still remember being a very wide-eyed 14-year-old walking the campus for the first time and seeing what looked like adult men everywhere. Many sported mustaches and letterman jackets. Watching them strut across the quad with beautiful girls on their arms was one thing—sitting next to them in typing class was quite another.

Other moments seem to take on a vastly greater significance now.

"I just always wonder about the gay thing," one lesbian friend (who did not know R) told me during a chat a few days after I saw R's death certificate for the first time. "We lose so many at that age—and especially that long ago, during those times. It was suffocating being gay in the '80s. That was my first time thinking about ending it all."

Another friend, one who grew up in the equally rough 1970s but later came out, agreed. "In high school, you keep your mouth shut," he told me. "Because you don't want to get your ass beat, and you don't want to lose your friends."

So many closeted teens have taken their own lives that in 2010, writer Dan Savage (of "Savage Love" fame) and his husband, Terry Miller, started the It Gets Better movement, in which they and thousands of others contributed YouTube videos on teen bullying.

I have no evidence that R was in the closet. And I can't imagine that his parents, so decent and progressive as they were, would have had a problem with him coming out as homosexual.

Still, I'm thinking a lot now about the fact that R and I never talked about girls. I talked about girls with other friends of mine, but never with him. There was also the time, maybe a few months before his death, when R asked me if I wanted to be roommates with him after high school. Without thinking, I answered pragmatically. I had no idea where I was going to college, and figuring that there was a decent chance we would go to different schools, I told him I just didn't know. Sometime later, he asked me again, and I gave him the same answer. We were still just juniors in high school, I remember thinking. It was far too early to be thinking of such things. I know I thought nothing of it at the time, but I also never forgot the exchange.

Even if R were struggling with sexual-identity issues, there's never a single reason for a catastrophe such as suicide. I learned this back in 2014, when a close friend of mine took his life six months after his honorable discharge from the U.S. Army. The decision to take your own life has layers of psychological and psychiatric reasons, some obvious, others contradictory. Even suicide notes (and to my knowledge, R didn't leave one behind) can tell only part of the story. The only person who truly knows why is never around after the fact to explain it.

In the end, I'm left with questions about not only his conduct, but also mine. Have I spent the past three decades feeling the wrong pain?

Today, we often see in stories about suicide a call for those feeling alienated to reach out. But asking for help is a rational act—the kind of thing that usually gets smothered by depression.

Instead, I find myself focusing on what I saw—and didn't see—in the teenager I considered my closest friend. There's also anger that I wasn't more thoughtful at the time. I was a heterosexual white boy in the 1980s. Though I had strong women influencing my development, I was still very much a product of the time: uncomfortable sharing emotions, masculine, aggressive. As a young man, I would have been appalled at the thought of a boy wearing a dress to school. And while I didn't participate in the catcalls yelled at a young man suspected of being homosexual, I didn't object to them, either.

Yes, I was basically a child when R died. But I'm not now. While I'll likely never know if I did enough back then, I'm haunted by the question of whether I'm doing enough for the friends I have now. Because that's the point to all this: being more considerate with my time, not taking my friends for granted—pretty much doing what I can to not be a jerk to the people I care about.

"Suicide is like dropping a rock in the pond of the universe, with the ripples propagating endlessly," our high school English teacher told me. "You never know when you will be rocked by one of those fucking ripples."

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

If you're suffering and want to reach out to someone, you can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255.

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Happy 29th!

Celebrating Twenty-Nine Years Of OC Pride

By Anne Murillo • Photos By Roger Santana

"Follow the confetti!" a young OC Pride festival-goer excitedly said, as he and his friends headed up 4th Street in Downtown Santa Ana toward the starting point of the annual Pride parade. It was an early Saturday morning, but there was already a sizable number of people sitting and patiently waiting for the parade to start. And while the morning weather was cloudy, the volume of rainbow, Transgender Pride and other flags and colorfully dressed citizens made up for the lack of sunniness.

On this, the day of the 29th annual OC Pride Festival, whose theme this year was brightly branded as "Be You," the sights of LGBTQ+ folk of all ages—from white-haired grandpas to apple-cheeked young'uns—is a far cry from the first ever OC Pride event that took place in Santa Ana in September 1989. Called the Orange County Cultural Pride Festival (the title intentionally made vague to dispel potential protests and to not dissuade vendors from participating), that event was still very much a battle for Orange County-based gays, lesbians and others on the gender spectrum to fully and freely be themselves, let alone hold an event that acknowledged their existence.

That day, festivalgoers saw crowds, many of them families, hold picket signs, throw dirty diapers on them, leave nails on the path of their motorcade, and other hostile actions. On this overcast Saturday morning, only one picketer was seen, vastly outnumbered by revelers.

The tide has undoubtedly turned for LGBTQ+ folk at large, but a quick glance at current events points to more struggle: It was only two years ago that the Pulse nightclub shooting happened in Orlando, Florida, and no administrative action has happened to change or prevent further shootings, trans folk still turn up dead in large numbers, or in ICE custody; the White House has even scrapped its LGBT page from its website.

In the face of turbulent times, Pride events are global spaces for self-celebration. They're an escape from the present, a celebration for the rights LGBT people have won, and a glimpse of the future. As queer scholar José Esteban Muñoz wrote in his book, *Cruising Utopia*, "The future is queerness' domain. ... Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world."

It may take longer than we expect to reach a better world, but as being present at a Pride event shows, the wellspring of action within LGBT+ people and allies runs deep. So, then, we'll march, dance and fight on together so that future generations can follow the confetti that leads to their utopia.

Happy Pride!

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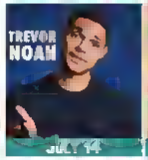

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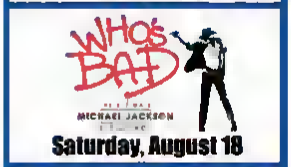

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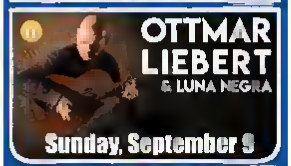

Sunday, September 9

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minority reportz

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HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KIDS

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fri/06/29

[THEATER]

A CAMPY CLASSIC!

The Rocky Horror Show

Richard O'Brien's 1976 cult classic *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* has had thousands of midnight screenings that have been viewed, booed, jeered and celebrated by dedicated followers and fans since its initial release, prompting audience members to yell back at the screen and come dressed as the film's main characters. Maverick Theater brings to the stage the original theatrical version of the story, which lovingly calls back to '50s B-grade cinema and rock & roll while exploring American sexual mores through one couple's introduction to a Transylvanian transexual scientist making a man for his own pleasure. Don't miss this intriguing theatrical take on an iconic story you either love, loathe or both!

The Rocky Horror Show at Maverick Theater, 110 E. Walnut Ave., Fullerton, (714) 526-7070, mavericktheater.com. 8 p.m. Through Aug. 11. $15-$30.
—AIMEE MURILLO

[FILM]

Laughing Matters

The Mads: Live

Even though *Mystery Science Theater 3000* has enjoyed a relatively recent reboot with a venerable new cast (Felicia Day, Jonah Ray Rodrigues, Patton Oswalt, et al.), fans of the original Satellite of Love crew can't help but welcome back some of the original personalities that gave it its comical zaniness. "TV's Frank" Conniff and Trace Beaulieu will be present at the Frida Cinema in person to riff on an awfully bad film and a short film (both titles will be announced at the actual event), then entertain questions and host a meet-and-greet session with the audience. Tonight's the first of three shows in which the Mads will be exploring some Z-grade films, so hop aboard for this epic mission through some truly bad movies fit for humorous consumption!

The Mads: Live at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 285-9422, thefridacinema.org. 8 p.m.; also Sat. $25.
—AIMEE MURILLO

sat/06/30

[CONCERT]

LAY US DOWN

Dirty Heads

As has become a summer rite of passage, Dirty Heads will make their triumphant local return with a large-scale show befitting of a band that has defined the reggae-rock sound in the past decade. Though not as giant an event as the group did last year, a huge amphitheater date is nothing to scoff at. Having released their sixth studio album, *Swim*, last October, the band heads into the summer with the momentum of a couple of charting singles in "Vacation" and "Celebrate." And celebrate they will, as their shows in Orange County are usually nothing short of good-time reunions. As the summer gets into full swing, there are fewer bands that encapsulate that vibe better than Dirty Heads.

KROQ presents Dirty Heads with Iration, Movement and Pacific Dub at Five-Point Amphitheatre, 14800 Chinon Ave., Irvine, www.fivepointamphitheatre.com. 6:30 p.m. $30-$50.
—WYOMING REYNOLDS

[PERFORMING ARTS]

Living Legends

Liza Minnelli & Michael Feinstein

One of the most legendary performers of all time (and daughter of another of the most legendary performers of all time, Judy Garland), Liza Minnelli is one of the very few artists to have achieved the EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony awards), and her legacy of song, dance and acting places her securely into the category of megastar—as well as eternal LGBT icon. Joined onstage by her pal of many decades, composer/singer/pianist Michael Feinstein, Minnelli reminisces about her storied career with fans and friends against a backdrop of clips from her films, musical performances and television work. Don't miss this rare chance to experience Minnelli in all her glory, and remember: It's Liza with a Z, not Lisa with an S!

Liza Minnelli & Michael Feinstein at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2787, www.scfta.org. 7:30 p.m. $49-$129.
—SR DAVIES

sun/07/01

[ART]

Art Bound

Sawdust Art Festival

Arts and crafts, thy name is Laguna! For a reasonable ticket cost, you and the fam can attend Laguna Beach's 52nd Annual Sawdust Art Festival, which provides three stages of live music and entertainment, affordable beer and wine, food, art demonstrations and classes, and, of course, art! Come and see exhibitions of hand-blown glassware, wood and metal sculpture, paintings, jewelry, clothing and textiles, photography, surf art, and more. And it's all set in the charming Sawdust Village, which was built within a 3-acre eucalyptus grove. Support and celebrate the arts by diving into the Sawdust Art Festival!

Sawdust Art Festival at 935 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-3030, sawdustartfestival.org. 10 a.m. Through Sept. 2 $4-$9 —SCOTT FEINBLATT

[THEATER]

Big As Life

Big Fish

In whatever incarnation you can imagine, Daniel Wallace's *Big Fish* has enchanted the minds of many with its storyline of a young man uncovering the fantastical experiences and myths of his father's life as told by his father. In this musical version written by John August, Andrew Lippa's music and lyrics bring Wallace's story alive in a new way, in a production directed at Chance Theater by Oanh Nguyen and choreographed by Kelly Todd. Whether you read the original book by Wallace or saw the exceptional Tim Burton adaptation, feel enchanted all over again, or experience it brand-new and let its larger-than-life narrative lift you up.

Big Fish at Chance Theater, 5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, (888) 455-4212, chancetheater.com. 8 p.m. Through July 29 $31-$35 —AIMEE MURILLO

mon/07/02

[FAMILY EVENTS]

Wild, Wild West!

Ghost Town Alive

HBO's *Westworld* is about to finish its second season, but OC locals know there's always another park where guests and hosts can interact as part of precisely plotted Old West-style meta-narratives—Knott's Berry Farm's Ghost Town Alive. Actors/actresses pick up the story of last year's gold strike with a sequel about the gold rush, and parkgoers can be a part of everything from wholesome Old West hoedowns to wholesome Old West bank robbery. Guests can even affect the storylines with no chance of triggering an AI-awakening scenario!

Ghost Town Alive at Knott's Berry Farm, 8039 Beach Blvd., Buena Park, (714) 220-5200, www.knotts.com. 11 a.m. Through Aug. 13 $50-$82 —CHRIS ZIEGLER

tue/07/03

[FILM]

Fear the Water

Jaws

Steven Spielberg's 1975 blockbuster hit *Jaws* will always be something of a summer film, keeping alive the fear of going into large bodies of water decades after its release. The movie tracks police chief Martin Brody's (Roy Schneider) efforts to protect his community from a possible shark after numerous citizens are violently attacked on the beach, often butting heads with the town mayor and his civic cohorts. *Jaws* notably drew connections to the Watergate scandal during the '70s, so keep that bit of relevant commentary in the back of your mind during this weeknight viewing. Oh, yeah, and don't forget to quote along during the famous line "We're going to need a bigger boat!"

Jaws at Directors Cut Cinema Rancho Niguel, 25471 Rancho Niguel Rd., Laguna Niguel, (949) 831-0446, www.regencymovies.com. 7:30 p.m. $8 —AIMEE MURILLO

wed/07/04

[FOURTH OF JULY]

HOLIDAY ON THE HARBOR

All American 4th of July

What better place to celebrate America's independence than aboard a ship named after a matriarch of the very kingdom we seceded from? The *RMS Queen Mary*, docked in Long Beach, is throwing an "All American 4th of July" event, and with it comes all the food, drink, fireworks and music that is synonymous with our holiday. Bring the family and enjoy a day of games, arts and crafts, even a 4D-movie experience while romping around the great ship after sunset, settle in for a massive fireworks display set to a backdrop of "patriotic music" (naturally).

All American 4th of July at the *Queen Mary*, 1126 Queens Hwy., Long Beach, (877) 342-0738, www.queenmary.com. 2 p.m. $24-$99. —ERIN DEWITT

[HEALTH & FITNESS]

Run for a Cause!

40th Annual Run In the Parks

On a holiday such as today's, it behooves us to take advantage of any opportunity to do good for our communities. The long-running Run In the Parks event at the Laguna Niguel YMCA brings runners, joggers, walkers, dog-walkers and strollers together to embark on a 5K or 10K stretch of road to not only exercise, but also to benefit the YMCA's scholarship program. The race itself follows some scenic territory across Laguna Niguel Regional Park, whose low-impact terrain allows participants to engage in the event without feeling too pooped. So if you're planning to celebrate 4th of July with a full-on barbecue, feel better doing so after getting in some exercise for a good cause.

MORE » ONLINE
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40th Annual Run In the Parks at Crown Valley Community Park, 29831 Crown Valley Pkwy., Laguna Niguel, www.ymcaoc.org/run-in-the-parks/. 7:30 a.m. Registration, $15-$40. —AIMEE MURILLO

thu/07/05

[PERFORMING ARTS]

Taking It In Stride

An Evening of American Ragtime

We've still three long months to wait until the Orange County Ragtime Society presents its annual RagFest, this year in Brea, a heroic concert featuring local boosters of the original upbeat American pre-jazz musical form. Helpfully, the Muckenthaler Cultural Center hosts a mid-summer syncopation celebration with some of the best of last year's festival lineup—players on every instrument that can pick, strum, beat, tickle or percuss à la ragtime or "stride" piano legends Scott Joplin and Jelly Roll Morton. From the historic mansion atop a hill in Fullerton, tap along gently if euphorically to classics such as the "King Porter Stomp," "Maple Leaf Rag" or "Heliotrope Bouquet," with contemporary compositions and a view to beat the band.

An Evening of American Ragtime at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center, 1201 W. Malvern Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6595, themuck.org. 7:30 p.m. $25. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

COURTESY OF UCI

[THEATER]

SUMMER OF THE BARD

The Winter's Tale

The New Swan Shakespeare Festival launches once again outdoors at UC Irvine, kicking things off with one of Shakespeare's lesser known, later works, *The Winter's Tale*. In this play, the friendship of kings Leontes and Polixenes is tested when one suspects the other of having an affair with his wife and fathering the child she is carrying. That child, named Perdita, is abandoned by the king, and after sixteen years of being raised by an elderly shepherd, Perdita is to be betrothed to Florizel, the son of Polixenes, an event that sparks the unraveling of hidden truths for everyone. This play contains the famous, albeit cryptic stage direction, "Exit, pursued by a bear," but nevertheless will enthrall Shakespeare lovers.

The Winter's Tale at New Swan Theater at UC Irvine, Irvine, (949) 824-2787, newswanshakespeare.com. 8 p.m. $15-$50. Through Sept. 1. —AIMEE MURILLO

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8/9 BUDDY GUY
8/10 GEOFF TATE'S OPERATION MINDCRIME
8/24 THE ALARM
8/27 AMANDA SHIRES
7/15 RITA COOLIDGE
7/22 THE FIXX

6/28	TED NUGENT
6/29	SERPENTINE FIRE (Santana, Winds and Fire Tribute)
6/30	LIVE DEAD & RIDERS '69 (Celebrating Music of Grateful Dead & Many Bands of The Psych Scene Featuring Eric
7/5	GUN BOAT KINGS
7/7	YOUNG DUBLINERS
7/10	ERIC JOHNSON
7/13	COCO MONTOYA
7/14	Guitar Legend DICK DALE
7/15	RITA COOLIDGE
7/19	LITTLE RIVER BAND
7/20	SUPER DIAMOND
7/21	MICK ADAMS & TH STONES
7/22	TNE FIXX
7/29	PATTY SMYTN & SCANDAL
7/27	NENRY KAPONO
7/29	DDKKEN
8/3	VENICE
8/4	ABBAFAB
8/5	RDNNIE SPECTOR & TNE RDNETTES
8/9	BUDDY GUY
8/10	GEOFF TATE'S: 30th Anniversary of Operation: Mindcrime
8/17	TNREE DDG NIGNT / Danny McGaw
8/19	IRDN BUTTERFLY
8/18	PETER ASNER (Peter & Gordon), JEREMY CLYDE (Chatt & Jewemy)
8/24	TNE ALARM
8/25	NDNK
8/27	AMANDA SNIRES
8/30	MIDGE URE AND PAUL YDUNG
9/1	WILD CNILD
9/2	TNE ENGLISN BEAT
9/7	JUSTIN NAYWARD
9/15	DESPERADD
9/18	PNIL VASSAR
9/20	RICNIE KOTZEN, VINNIE MOORE, AND GUS G
9/21	NERMAN'S NERMITS feat. PETER NDDNE
9/22	NERMAN'S NERMITS feat. PETER NDDNE

UPCOMING SHOWS

9/29	TNE SWEET
10/5	TNE ASSOCIATION
10/12	JD SDUTNER
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Pho Your Consideration

Grandpa's Kitchen—Dry Noodles 168 serves a soupless version of pho

BY EDWIN GOEI

Grandpa's Kitchen—Dry Noodles 168 has a dish I've neither seen nor tasted before in Little Saigon. On the menu, it's called "Grandpa's Dry Noodles," but the Vietnamese translation, pho khô, reveals what it really is: the soupless version of pho. To put it another way, it's a deconstruction of the noodle soup that has become the defining dish of the enclave.

When I say "deconstruction," I don't mean something made by a Ferran Adrià acolyte that's gone in two bites, this is a dish that seems an organic evolution of pho—something that an actual grandfather might have come up with on a day that was too muggy for soup.

These dry noodles are exactly that: a way to have pho and all its flavors without having to deal with huge steaming bowl of hot soup. The rice noodles—the same kind found submerged in broth—are tossed and coated in a special sauce that has whiffs of all the requisite pho spices, including star anise, cinnamon and coriander. I suspect the secret behind the recipe is actually a reduced broth that's been seasoned with soy sauce, sugar and Maggi.

The resulting dish is like watching a previously typecasted character actor finally land that starring role he was born to play. The noodles stand tall, no longer supporting the soup. Instead, they carry the entire flavor of the dish. And then there's the texture. Since they don't continuously cook or get waterlogged in the broth, the noodles remain springy, almost al dente.

I've since learned that pho khô is a specialty of Pleiku, a city in Vietnam's central highland region. *The Lonely Planet* guide notes that it's the most popular street food in town, often served with crunchy pork cracklings and soup on the side. The version that Grandpa's Kitchen offers also has pork cracklings sprinkled like croutons along with torn pieces of green leaf lettuce that get in the way.

On top of the noodles, the chef layers on thinly sliced flank steak and fat-rimmed brisket. Ordering the dish here, just as in Pleiku, also means you're going to get a bowl of hot soup to sip. It's a bona-fide pho broth, aromatic of anise, the small bowl embellished with two tiny beef meatballs that bob like buoys. And thanks to an insulating layer of melted fat, the liquid remains boiling hot throughout the meal.

Though you don't really need to use any of them, every table is equipped with no less than 10 condiments. Huy Fong's Sriracha is among them, of course, but the most essential are the pickled garlic slices and a paste of mashed chiles so good and hot your salivary and sweat glands are activated just looking at it.

You're more likely to use these condiments if you order Grandma's Dry Noodles, or oil khô, which is a dry egg-noodle dish that isn't as rare in Little Saigon as the pho version. A different dressing coats the thin, yellow strands, something understated that tastes more or less like a blend of soy, hoisin and maybe oyster sauce. Instead of sliced beef and a pho broth, there are cuts of pork meat and a pork soup. In place of the basil leaves that come with the pho khô, pickled green papayas and carrots accompany the plate of bean sprouts. But the pork cracklings are a constant.

No matter what version of dry noodle (the menu has at least five more variants), what becomes evident as you slurp is that Grandpa's Kitchen has found the sweet spot between Chinese-style dry noodles (which often rely on oil or rendered fat for flavor) and the Japanese dry-noodle dish tsukemen (which you have to dip into the sauce).

Grandpa's Kitchen does offer noodles in soup, including hu tieu Nam Vang, something the Vietnamese adopted from the Cambodians that, I would argue, is Little Saigon's second-most-popular noodle soup. But as with the pho khô, it's best to opt for the rarely seen, such as the banh duc nong, an appetizer described as "pork rice flan." It's actually a rice-flour porridge topped with a mix of ground pork, wood ear mushrooms and crispy, fried shallots. Cooked and served in a steaming French-onion-soup crock pot, it's a white-hot sludge of starch that scalds as it comforts.

I haven't researched from where bánh dúc nóng hails, but some things are better left as mysteries, such as what the "168" in the restaurant's name signifies or why Little Saigon restaurants with random numbers on the marquee are usually better than the ones without.

GRANDPA'S KITCHEN—DRY NOODLES 168
14208 Brookhurst St., Garden Grove, (714) 462-6259. Open daily, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Noodles, $9-$10. No alcohol.

WHAT THE ALE

» GREG NAGEL

Estrella Jalisco and Golden Road's Mango Michelada

With my head throbbing one fine Sunday morning, I walked the chubby chihuahua to the local Anaheim bodega (which ironically is in *No Doubt's Sunday Morning* video) to pick up the fixins to make my favorite hangover cure: a spicy michelada. "You're into craft beer, right?" asks the older guy behind the counter, TV blasting the Mexico vs. Germany World Cup game. He points to the open ice cooler with sweaty tall boy cans and pulls out an Estrella Jalisco Golden Road Mango Michelada with a grin. "This is new."

My two functioning brain cells fought internally. "But those are both Bud Weiser products!" said one. The other devilish one fired back, "how bad could it be?" whipping a crinkled $5 bill on the counter before stumbling home in a Stefani-like daze.

What happens when you mix a fruited wheat ale with a Corona clone, Clamato, natural flavors and "certified color"?

On the pour, Mango Michelada moves like a Mother's Day strawberry bath bomb, the color matching the pastel red on the can, lacing like a less pulpy V8. On the nose is a familiar sweat stank, sort of like if you walked into the wake of a friend's fresh burp after eating Takis chased by Orange Crush. On the sip, I was hoping for delicious chile-covered dried mangos, but instead, it drinks like Bud Chelada with a fruity sweetness that seems out of place. Although I think there's a time and place for all beers, this one is just a bit too cloying and unenjoyable. It's fun to see the world's first macro beer collab, but I give this a 2/5 stars on Untappd. No *mames*.

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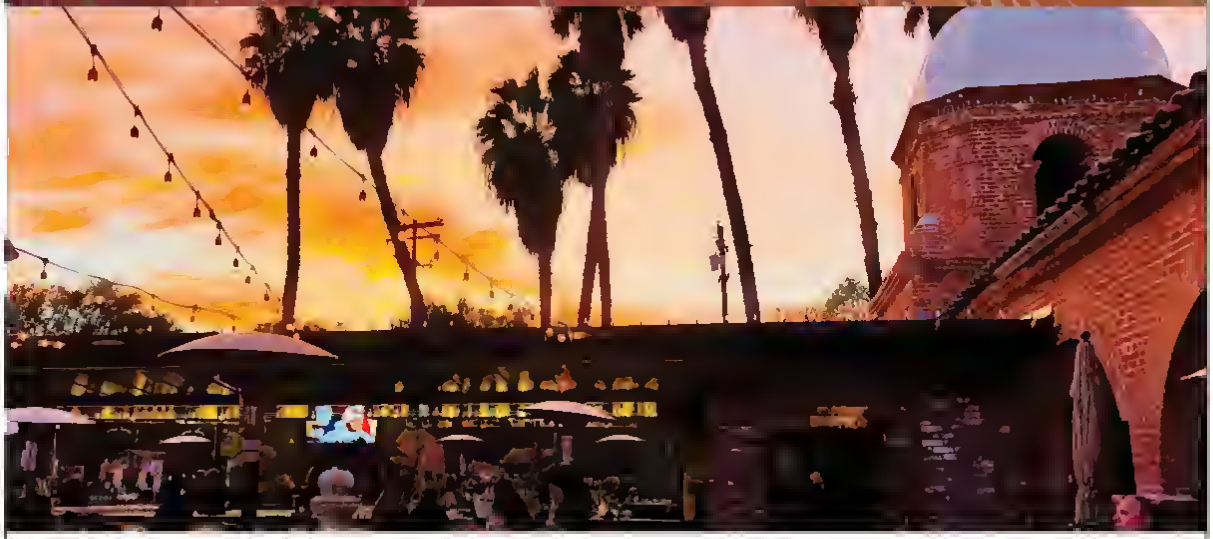

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#EATLBC

Beach City Food Tours shows off Downtown Long Beach's culinary scene

SARAH BENNETT

LONGBEACHLUNCH
» SARAH BENNETT

The only food tour through downtown Long Beach starts big—with a fiery flash, a drizzle of lemon juice and a hearty "*Opa!*"

Five days a week, Beach City Food Tours initiates its lunchtime Downtown Long Beach Walking Tour at George's Greek Cafe, where visitors savor the local institution's famous saganaki appetizer, a so-called "flaming cheese" that's a slice of springy kasseri doused in alcohol, then set ablaze table-side in a cast-iron skillet.

It's a fitting introduction to the neighborhood's current (and growing) culinary offerings, which span from homegrown brands with strong immigrant roots such as George's to new-wave start-ups that sprouted from cottage businesses to storefronts.

I visited all of these and more on my first Beach City Food Tour, a three-hour stroll to seven restaurants, coffee shops, juicers and dessert bars within a few blocks of one another that gives visitors not only food and drink to replenish calories lost walking, but also insight into the art, history and diversity that make Long Beach unique.

Admittedly, I was skeptical about taking a food tour in my own hometown, especially since I spent years running the restaurant gauntlet down Pine Avenue when I had an office gig there, plus, well, it's kind of my job now to know which Long Beach food makers are worth sending tourists to.

But Beach City Food Tours founder Layla Ah-Ahmad, who started the company about two years ago and has lived in the city for nearly a decade, created an impressively thorough circuit that is fun, educational and highly recommended, even for locals.

Her two other tour guides—Cassidy Liston and Lisa Mendoza—also understand the city beyond the first few Google search pages, and as we ate that first flaming saganaki at George's, it was Liston who proudly told our group the little-known tale of how the Cyprus-born George Lozides landed in Long Beach on the heels of a stint in, of all places, Zimbabwe.

After George's, we walked to Pier 76, then Michael's Pizzeria, then Rainbow Juices for a colorful, cold-pressed flight, with Liston stopping along the way to discuss the architecture of several downtown buildings ("Look up" is always good advice in downtown!)

On the tour the day I booked was a Peruvian couple from Chino who were free of their tween daughter until the evening and decided to make a daycation out of it (an alcohol add-on is also available at most of the stops). Together, we drank iced basil-fruit coffee from Recreational, licked clean our shot glasses of key lime pie from the Pie Bar and destroyed sample platters of house-made confections from Romeo Chocolates—all while hearing the inspirational stories behind each small business and chatting casually with Liston about all the other things there are to love about Long Beach.

I didn't get stuffed, but I didn't leave hungry either. More than anything, though, the tour made me proud of all the culinary advancements the city has made in the past few years—and even prouder to know there is a food tour worthy enough to show it off proper. Summer is high season for Beach City's downtown tour, but already, Ali-Ahmad is scheming for the next one she wants to launch: an East Village Cocktail Tour, with mixologist appearances, spirits education and, of course, a slice of history at each stop.

BEACH CITY FOOD TOURS
runs the Downtown Walking Tour, Wed.-Sun., beginning at 11 a.m.; www.beachcityfoodtours.com
Prices start at $69

El Mercado's New Summer Cocktails

Plus pairings!

GREG NAGEL

"Is a negroni without Campari really a negroni?" I think to myself, sitting patiently at El Mercado's bar on the east side of downtown Santa Ana. Head barman, Cesar Cerrudo, handsaws a clear ice chunk like some sort of handyman, plops it in my glass, then swizzles Chartreuse, smoky mezcal and Americano Aperitivo together, clipping an orange peel to the side like a bow on a gift before sliding it my way.

What's in the glass is a peek into this drink-creator's mind.

"I find Campari to be a bit too sweet, I want my negroni to finish clean," says Cerrudo. And indeed it does. His negroni is light and blushing with personality, letting the smoky phenols from the mezcal take the usual spotlight of the standard gin-Campari botanical hitter. Also absent is the standard negroni's normal viscosity. Instead, you're treated to a few extra ABVs, which not only thins the drink out, but you get a bit more bang for the buck.

During the day, Mercado's long and slender dining-room windows let light pour in like an oldtime train's fancy dining car. At night, the train departs for some sort of romantic adventure in the dim-and-moody hip restaurant.

I'd imagine a lot of mezcal flies across Mercado's bar, which ties in with the kitchen's cuisine. Smoke in any cocktail, whether it be from bar-pyrotechnics or distillery-smoked fermentables, can send Pavlovian signals to the brain that it's almost time to eat. Where there's smoke, there's food.

Pulpo a la Plancha ($16), delivered under glass floating in a cloud of cinnamon smoke, is the perfect Tinder match for Cerrudo's negroni. Its plump and delicate tentacles are crisp like a chicharrón, yet cut easily with a fork, sitting comfortably on a bed of smutty corn hash and salsa. "If I was chef, I'd want to put my tentacles all over this hash, as well," I quip to my kid, who shakes her head in dad-joke embarrassment.

If smoke aromatics and octopus aren't your jam, the carnitas ($16) is another house specialty not to be missed. It's like a built-to-scale Mayan pyramid of pork resting in its own juices with a piñata of sweet onions and cilantro shrubbery. The house tortillas offer the crispy-pork party a vehicle for quick mouth delivery, combining the ingredients for adequate au-jus dipping to reach total carnitas enlightenment. Looking for a drink to match, I went with Cerrudo's new guascas cocktail, which is named after the Columbian namesake herb. A tea is made with it, mixing a bit of non-smoky mezcal and other house magic, making the sweetness in the carnitas pop. On its own, the drink has a chrysanthemum-like herbal-tea character with a delicate honey sweetness and complex finish that lasts a good twenty seconds.

El Mercado's summer cocktail menu is in full effect with six new drinks. Follow Cesar at @muxx2drinkk and El Mercado at @mercadomodern. See you there!

Eat & Drink This Now

» GREG NAGEL

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301 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana, (714) 338-2446, www.mercadomodern.com

LIVE MUSIC WEEKLY SCHEDULE

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Andrew Bloom 8pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*
Mando Cordova 7pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

FRIDAY 6/29
Party Foul 9pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*
DJ Blunk 9pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

SATURDAY 6/30
Room at The Top 9PM-Close *Shebeen Bar*
DJ Audissey 9pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

SUNDAY 7/1
Jazz Brunch w/Maureen O Sullivan
1pm- 3pm *Shebeen Bar*
Einstein Brown 5pm-7:30pm *Shebeen Bar*
Upstream 7:30pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*
Francois Daan 6pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

MONDAY 7/2
Anthony Crawford 8pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*

TUESDAY 7/3
Justin Abrams 8pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*

WEDNESDAY 7/4
Heppy 4th of July!* Went to see the fireworks? visit our website to purchase tickets for Space on our Rooftop! $20

THURSDAY 7/5
Andrew Bloom 8pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*
Mendo Cordove 7pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

FRIDAY 7/6
Nick I Hernandez 9pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*
DJ Blunk 9pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

SATURDAY 7/7
Slapbak 9pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*
DJ Audissay 9pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

SUNDAY 7/8
Jazz Brunch w/Mendo & Friends
1pm- 3pm *Shebeen Bar*
Einstein Brown 5pm-7:30pm *Shebeen Bar*
Massive McGregor 7:30pm-Close *Shebeen Bar*
Francois Daan 6pm-Close *DBN Lounge*

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COURTESY OF SHOUT! STUDIOS

Hot Mess Alert

Izzy Gets the Fuck Across Town is an inventive indie

BY MATT COKER

Watching Mackenzie Davis in the low-budget indie *Izzy Gets the Fuck Across Town* had me thinking about Cary Grant in that most Hollywood of classics, Alfred Hitchcock's *North By Northwest*.

That's not because of the acting by the leads, which is masterful in both, but because Davis spends most of *Izzy*'s 86-minute runtime sweating up a storm in the same outfit, as did Grant's Roger O. Thornhill.

Both characters nearly took me out of their pictures as I wondered to myself how badly they must have smelled by the third acts, although Thornhill does at least stop to get his overworked suit pressed. Compounding matters for Davis is my transposing the imagined odor of her Cameron Howe after marathon video-game-coding sessions on AMC's *Halt and Catch Fire*. Halt and catch a shower, please!

Fortunately, writer/director Christian Papiernak's feature debut, *Izzy Gets the Fuck Across Town*—which is known on marquees and in movie ads as *Izzy Gets the F--- Across Town* or *Izzy Gets the F*ck Across Town*—is so inventive and captivating that you hang with it anyway. It's a cinematic concoction that might be duplicated were you to mix *The Graduate*, *The Party* and *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* in a blender, strain out the penises and Hollywood excess, add a dash of Heavens to Betsy's 1994 CD *Calculated*, and let it all come to a decidedly DIY boil.

Which brings us back to Davis, whose Izzy is crash-landing into the day when being a hot mess as a late twentysomething will be deemed pathetic. We first meet her waking up hungover, nearly naked and unaware of where exactly she is in Los Angeles. Adding to the mystery is the passed-out guy (*Atlanta*'s Lakeith Stanfield) next to her in bed. After slipping back into the dirty uniform from her one-and-done catering job the night before, Izzy finds out with whom she hooked up while blackout drunk so that she can bum a ride home.

Not only is it not really Izzy's home, but it is also demanded by the couple whose name is on the lease that she vacate their couch. More worrisome to Izzy is news she just learned on Instagram. Her ex-boyfriend and ex-BFF are celebrating their looming nuptials at a bougie party that will start in several hours in the hills of Los Feliz.

Before reading the social-media post, Izzy did not even know of the relationship, which she is convinced she must break up because her ex is supposed to live happily ever after with her. But our penniless protagonist is so relatively new to the Southland, which she came to at the behest of her sister to jointly pursue a riot grrrl rock music career, that she mispronounces Los Feliz.

That's just one of her cross-town trip's many obstacles, which allow Izzy to pause long enough to interact with colorful characters in a sun-bleached LA that is far from the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

I found Davis and her moon-sized light blue eyes most compelling in scenes opposite another woman, as she previously demonstrated with Gugu Mbatha-Raw and Kerry Bishé on *Black Mirror* and *Halt and Catch Fire*, respectively. As Izzy, Davis' scene mates include Annie Potts (*Designing Women*), Alia Shawkat (*Arrested Development*), Carrie Coon (*The Leftovers*), Dolly Wells (*Doll & Em*) and Sarah Goldberg (*Barry*). That's solid casting for such a small film.

The men in the cast are no slouches either, whether they are seasoned dramatic actors such as Stanfield and Alex Russell (*S.W.A.T.*) or comedic actors such as Haley Joel Osment (*Silicon Valley*) and Rob Huebel (*Transparent*). Standup comic Kyle Kinane, who is the voice of Comedy Central, also deserves a shoutout for his feral cameo.

For a project by a male filmmaker whose biggest credit to date is directing the mighty video-game franchise *NBA2K*, *Izzy Gets the Fuck Across Town* has a decidedly feminine tone, which is so refreshing these days. That may have something to do with what I noticed as the end credits rolled, after the title card for Papiernak: several more in a row identified female producers, including Davis.

Add to that the central role played by the Heavens to Betsy song "axemen," which is heard in its original form by the band and in a surprisingly poignant duet sung by Coon and Davis, and it's small wonder *Izzy Gets the Fuck Across Town* passes the smell test.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

IZZY GETS THE FUCK ACROSS TOWN **was written and directed by Christian Papiarniak, and stars Mackanzie Davis, Carrie Coon, Alex Russell, Alia Shawkat and Haley Joel Osment.**

Outdoor Movie Night!

BY MATT COKER

Won't You Be My Neighbor? This documentary takes you to the heart of the late Fred Rogers' career, which he dedicated to how best to speak with young kids, even beyond *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, his PBS children's show. *Regency South Coast Village, 1561 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701. Thurs., June 28, 11:45 a.m., 2:15, 4:45, 7:15 & 9:35 p.m. $9.50-$12.50; also at Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, 25471 Rancho Niguel Rd., Laguna Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Thurs., June 28: 12:15, 2:35, 5, 7:45 & 10:05 p.m. $9.50-$12.50; and Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435. Fri.-Tues. & Thurs., July 5, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30 & 7:30 p.m., Wed., 11 a.m., 1:15, 3:30 & 6 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

It Follows. David Robert Mitchell's 2015 horror flick is about a teen (Maika Monroe) who, after sleeping with her new boyfriend for the first time, is informed by him that she has now received a fatal curse that will have a murderous, shape-shifting entity following her until it gets what it wants. "But I still had a really great time. Call me?" *The Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., June 28, noon, 2:30 & 5 p.m. $7-$10.*

The Master. The Directors series tribute to Paul Thomas Anderson continues with his dark 2012 drama that seems very much like the beginnings of Scientology under founder L. Ron Hubbard. Here, it is the Cause under founder Lancaster Dodd (Philip Seymour Hoffman), whose inner circle lashes out as his bond with an angst-ridden alcoholic drifter (Joaquin Phoenix) gets stronger. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., June 28, 12:30, 3:30 & 7:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Andy Irons: Kissed By God. Surfing champ Andy Irons' struggles with bipolar disorder and opioid addiction are covered in this documentary. The pride of Hawaii has said he hopes his story will dispel myths about two ferocious diseases. *Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Thurs., June 28, 7 p.m. $15.*

Bandstand. Beamed into theaters is a performance of the Broadway musical subtitled "The Boys Are Back." After American soldiers return from World War II in 1945, Private First Class Donny Novitski (Corey Cott) tries to rebuild his singer/songwriter career. When he learns NBC is hosting a national competition to find the next musical superstars, Danny forms a band with a motley crew of war veterans. Audiences of the simulcast enjoy never-before-seen, behind-the-scenes footage. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., June 28, 7 p.m. $18.*

***RuPaul's Drag Race:* Season Finale.** The 10th season closer is shown live by your party hostesses Isabella Xochitl, Electra Kute and Eden Apple. Show up in drag for free popcorn and a medium fountain drink. Frida's bar is open for drag racers ages 21 and older, too. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., June 28, 7:30 p.m. Free.*

Brigadoon. The Movies On the Lawn/Flashback Friday film is the 1954 MGM musical from director Vincente Minnelli and writer Alan Jay Lerner that has two Americans (Gene Kelly and Van Johnson) getting lost while hunting in Scotland. They come upon a small village where people behave as if they were still living 200 years in the past—and they harbor a mysterious secret. Bring a picnic, blankets and lawn chairs. Food trucks are on site. *Orange County Great Park, Palm Court, 6950 Marine Way, Irvine, ocgp.org. Fri., doors open, 6:30 p.m., screening, dusk. Free.*

Spider-Man: Homecoming. The Source OC's Outdoor Movie Night continues with the 2017 reboot from Marvel Studios and director/co-writer Jon Watts. Peter Parker (Tom Holland) balances his life as an ordinary high-school student and the superhero alter-ego facing a new menace prowling the skies of New York. Movie seating is first-come, first-served. *The Source OC, 6940 Beach Blvd., Buena Park, (714) 521-8858; www.thesourceoc.com. Fri., 7 p.m. Free.*

SONY PICTURES

Ratatouille. The Disney Summer Movie Series continues with the 2007 Disney Pixar animated action comedy that has a rat/chef (voiced by Patton Oswalt) cooking up an unusual alliance with a young kitchen worker at a famous restaurant. *Modjeska Park, 1331 S. Nutwood St., Anaheim, publicaffairs.disneyland.com/community/celebratesummer/. Fri., 7:45 p.m. Free.*

Despicable Me 3. The animated 2017 hit has the Minions wanting back their old crime boss, the fired Gru (voiced by Steve Carrell), but he considers himself retired as he travels to Fredonia to meet his long-lost twin brother. Bring blankets and chairs. Vendors on site sell food and drinks. *Stanton Central Park, 10660 Western Ave., Stanton, (714) 890-4270. Fri., 8 p.m. Free.*

The Mads: Live at the Frida! *Mystery Science Theater 3,000*'s original Crow T. Robot/Dr. Clayton Forrester (Trace Beaulieu) and TV's Frank (Frank Conniff) riff live along to a different surprise movie—a really, really *bad* surprise movie—at three separate screenings. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 8 p.m., Sat., 2:30 & 8 p.m. $25.*

The Secret Life of Pets. A 3D-animated tale about a terrier (voiced by Louis C.K., who could use a residual check about now) enjoying a comfortable life in New York until his owner adopts a giant and unruly canine, and both pooches wind up in a truck bound for the pound. *Aroyista Park, 415 W. Elm St., Brea, (714) 990-7112. Fri., 8 p.m. Free.*

Invasion of the Body Snatchers. San Franciscoans discover the human race is being replaced, one by one, with clones devoid of emotion. Brings to mind a certain White House, no? Donald Sutherland leads the cast of Philip Kaufman's 1978 horror/sci-fi flick that screens as an *OC Weekly* Friday Night Freakouts entry and beyond. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 11 p.m. Sat., 10 p.m. $7-$10.*

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

The Christians Takes You to Church

Don't be offended by the title of this well-crafted production at Costa Mesa Playhouse

BY JOEL BEERS

Yes, the name of the play is *The Christians*. Yes, it was written by young, emerging playwright Lucas Hnath, and it has seen productions in such hotbeds of liberal indoctrination as London, New York, Austin and Los Angeles. Yes, it is year two of the Donald Trump interregnum, and the kind of Christians that Hnath's 2015 play is about, at least in an ongoing production at the Costa Mesa Playhouse, are the kind of evangelicals who flock to megachurches and played an enormous role in getting that piece of bloviating idiocy elected.

But ask director Michael Serna whether this is a play that puts organized Christianity or any type of organized religion in the cross-hairs of liberal rhetorical venom, and you get a surprising answer. "Not at all," he says. "This isn't a play that casts any kind of judgment. If you're a devout Christian who thinks [any kind of staged theater production in 2018] is going to offend you, it won't happen—but also, if you have no religious beliefs at all, there is something for you."

Rather than a diatribe against religious faith or a lampoon of believers or non-believers, Hnath's play, says Serna, is more about getting to the heart of what faith is and what happens when one's belief in that faith might be threatened.

With that said, it's impossible to stage a play with a title such as this in a time such as this without recognizing its real-world backdrop.

"I am not a person who goes to church, but with so much [debate] about faith and evangelicals in our politics these days, I'm fascinated by it, by a world that drives so much of our politics and culture," Serna says.

While the script neither calls for a specific locale or even religion for the church at its heart, Serna has opted to set it in an evangelical megachurch in Orange County and has followed the script's dictum that the entire theater should feel as if you're walking into a church. "I was shocked when I saw the production at the [Mark Taper] Forum a few years ago," he recalls. "I fell in love with the play's structure and the style of what [Hnath] was trying to accomplish. I was kind of shocked that I had never seen a play where you walk into a venue and it's actually a church. Which makes kind of sense because there's more than a little church-like atmosphere to any theater. But he takes that and creates that sense, inside the theater, something we've tried really hard to emulate with this show."

COURTESY OF COSTA MESA PLAYHOUSE

The play follows the saga of Pastor Paul, who has presided over a church that began life as a modest storefront but now draws thousands of people. Yet he's been wrestling with his own dark night of the soul. He is tired of preaching about the literal existence of hell. And in attempting to preach a more secularized form of gospel that has helped to build his church into an enormous institution, he creates a schism in everything from the congregation to his marriage.

"It's more of a workplace drama than anything else, I'd say," says Serna, who took over this year as artistic director of the Costa Mesa Playhouse, which has held court in that city for 35 years. "And a personal drama, as the toll it takes on his marriage is examined, as is the conflict with his spiritual sons. Yet, it's a larger cultural drama as well, but really it's about individuals, and the decisions we make and their consequences."

Serna, 44, was asked late last year to lead the playhouse's creative vision. It has long been a community theater with a programming aesthetic a cut above OC's other community theaters. It has staged a diverse slate of adventurous musicals and straight plays, as well as the occasional new piece. Serna, who received his MFA from Cal State Fullerton and has acted and directed across the county since the early 2000s, is committed to sustaining that vision.

"I think this place has something going for it that puts it above other community theaters," he says. "The location, the facility we have, and the board the past couple of years has been very bold in bringing in unique musicals and the kind of plays that some other theaters may not do. I really think it's trying to raise the bar of what Orange County audiences might be willing to take, and I like being part of that."

THE CHRISTIANS
at Costa Mesa Playhouse, 661 Hamilton St., Costa Mesa, (949) 650-5269, costamesaplayhouse.com. Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m., Sun., 2 p.m. Through July 15. $20-$22.

ARTSOVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

June 29-July 5

"BRETT GREEN: THE LAST HIDING PLACE" Complex, large-scale paintings and fiberglass screens examine and deconstruct the lost allure of vintage photographs. Muckenthaler Cultural Center, 1201 W. Malvern Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6595, finmuck.org. Opens Tues. Sun., noon-4 p.m. Through Aug. 19. Free.

THE CHRISTIANS. A successful and influential pastor decides to deliver a sermon expressing his real beliefs about his faith, risking the allegiance of some of his congregants. Costa Mesa Playhouse, 661 Hamilton St., Costa Mesa, (949) 650-5269, costamesaplayhouse.com. Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m., Sun., 2 p.m. Through July 15. $20-$25.

LAGUNA BEACH FESTIVAL OF FINE ARTS SHOW. Annual festival that premiers and celebrates more than 100 established artists working in multiple mediums including ceramics, glass painting, mixed media, photography and more. Festival of Arts Grounds, 650 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, (800) 487-3378, www.lagunafestivaloffarts.org. Opens Mon.-Fri., noon-11:30 p.m., Sat.-Sun., 10 a.m.-11:30 p.m. Through Sept. 1. $5-$15.

THE MAGIC OF ADAM TRENT. The Broadway star of the *Illusionist* magic show brings a high-energy evening of magic tricks, comedy and other surprises. Segerstrom Hall, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 557-2787, www.scfta.org. Sun., 3 p.m. $49-$99.

MY FAIR LADY. The classic musical based on George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* tells the story of one young cockney girl's transformation into a lady by a linguistics professor in 19th century London. Long Beach Playhouse, 5021 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 494-1014, www.lbplayhouse.org. Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m., Sun., 2 p.m. Through Aug. 4. $24.

NEXT CHAPTER. The proceeds of this dance performance by Maha & Co. go toward Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES). Found Theatre, 569 Long Beach Blvd., Long Beach, (562) 433-3363, foundthnatre.org. Thursday, July 5, 7 p.m. also July 8, 2:30 p.m. Donations accepted.

1940S BATTLE OF THE BIG BANDS. This lively concert features Glee's Bill A. Jones and *Days of Our Lives'* Brad Bush along with singer Nancy Osborne. Irvine Barclay Theatre, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine, (949) 854-4646, www.thebarclay.org. Sat., 2 p.m. $44-$58.

THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF SONG. A musical revue that celebrates the work of *The Wizard of Oz* composer Harold Arlen, performed by Arlen's son Sam and singer/pianist George Bagatsi. Soka Performing Arts Center, 1 University Dr., Aliso Viejo, (949) 480-4000, www.soka.edu. Sun., 3 p.m. $18-$15.

OC WEEKLY Bulletin

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Pictured Left: @fknben
Pictured Right: @brownxglitter

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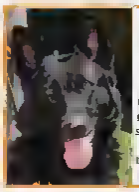
Upcoming Events

MissionFest ™
Wine - Craft Beer - Food - Music
San Juan Capistrano - July 7
For ticket info: missionfest.com

MEN ALIVE - OC GAY MEN's CHORUS
PRESENTS ANDREW LIPPA'S
- I AM HARVEY MILK -
July 20-21 - Irvine Barclay Theatre
OCGMC.org - 949.854.4640

Messages



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Rhinestone Cowboys

A writer and a Newport Beach collector revisit country music's flashiest era

BY NATE JACKSON

The old adage "never judge a book by its cover" probably doesn't mean much to anybody who values classic country, especially during the era of the Nudie suit. Popular during the 1960s and '70s, these bold, bedazzled articles of wearable art designed by Russian immigrant Nudie Cohn are nothing if not the finest cover known to man. The same goes for the guitars that legends such as Hank Snow, Porter Wagoner, Glen Campbell and Roy Rogers chose to sling over their shoulders. From the moment they hit the stage, before they even struck a note, everything on their body screamed star power.

"Roy Rogers would say [that] when he made public appearances where kids would be far away in an arena high up ... in a Nudie suit, kids would see him," says longtime music critic and historian Jim Washburn. "He was like a big, glaring flag, so he hoped they felt they were getting their money's worth."

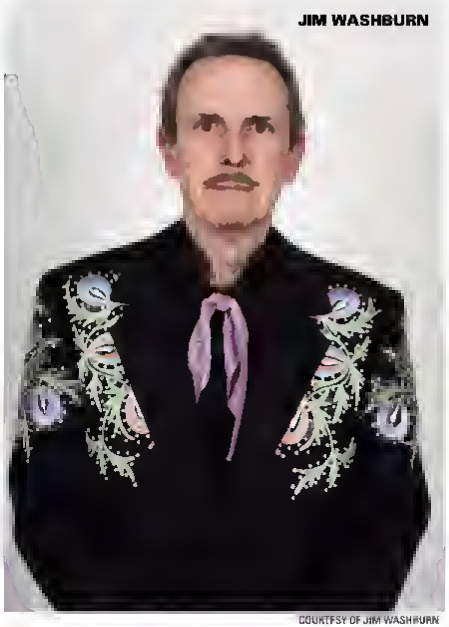
If you were to literally judge a book by its cover, *Rhinestones and Twanging Tones* is definitely worth a deeper look. It features breathtaking photos of Mac Yasuda's revered Nudie suit and classic guitar collections with words written by Washburn. Published in January by Hal Leonard, the 256-page book is an extension of the Fullerton Museum exhibit Washburn and Yasuda collaborated on 12 years ago by the same title.

Former *OC Weekly* executive editor Washburn had previously created an exhibit on OC rock & roll history that had featured hundreds of items gathered from nearly 100 sources. When the museum asked if he had other ideas for a show, Washburn thought of his friend Yasuda's collection of star-owned suits and guitars. "Along with being a great and historic assemblage, the idea of only having to go to one guy to get it all really appealed to me," he says.

Not only is *Rhinestones and Twanging Tones* impressive to look at, but the assortment of spangling suits and guitars also tells a story of country music's immigrant past. "On one hand, it's the hardscrabble music born from Heartland America blah, blah, blah, on the other, it's a really weird composite of stuff that has nothing to do with what it supposedly is," Washburn says. "You can trace some country stuff back to ancient Scottish murder ballads. Yodeling came from the alps, the steel guitar came from Hawaii, and a lot of the influence came from Hollywood."

Along with such non-countryside influences, you'll find Aussie Keith Urban wasn't the genre's first foreign star.

MAC YASUDA



JIM WASHBURN

COURTESY OF JIM WASHBURN

Probably the most famous example was Snow, a native Nova Scotian who ran away from home at the age of 12, cheated death several times and wound up in the U.S., where he'd become one of the foremost country-music stars to popularize Nudie suits. Yasuda, who has been a Newport Beach resident for decades, grew up in Japan and was fascinated by Snow after listening to one of his albums. He fell in love with the look, style and feel of country music.

"I knew nothing about [country music at the time], but it was the '60s, and everyone was getting a guitar and trying to [start] a band," Yasuda says. "So we were looking for something to do, and [a friend] brought in a record and said, 'Why don't you play like this?' and I said, 'Sure, I don't know anything about it, but why not?'"

Yasuda's infatuation with Western culture grew feverishly and inspired him to move to the States, first to Michigan Technological University on an engineering scholarship, then to a warmer climate in Newport Beach. Though he and Washburn have both written books on guitars in the past, this collaboration and specific dedication to timeless pieces in Yasuda's collection speak volumes about Yasuda's obsession with the culture as both a collector and as a performer.

From the time he started playing in country bands, the Japanese native was a hit with Americans who came to see him shred and sing cover tunes from the artists he idolized. "I went to the bar, and there was a country band playing, and I went in there one night and grabbed a guitar and started singing, and they got kind of shocked," Yasuda remembers. "Here's this little Japanese guy, a modest-looking kid, singing Hank Williams. They loved it."

With the $50 per week he earned playing at a bar, he would buy cheap American guitars that he would then sell to people in Japan for hundreds of dollars because they were considered rare in his home country. Yasuda gradually had enough money to start collecting really high-end guitars. His most prized possessions in his multimillion-dollar collection are the 15 pre-World War II Martin D-45 acoustics (only 91 of which ever existed worldwide), each of which is worth upward of $300,000.

He also owns Leo Fender's Broadcaster with the serial number 0019, along with a Gretsch White Penguin (one of only a handful known to exist) and piles of Gibson's coveted J-200s.

As Yasuda's army of guitars grew, so did his friendships with many of his country idols, including Wagoner and Snow, whom he performed with on the Grand Ole Opry stage in 1993. Dressed to the nines in one of his Nudie suits, Yasuda was something to see.

"I was introduced by Hank Snow on the same stage he [once] played [on] with Elvis Presley. ... I was all shook up," he says with a laugh. "Sometimes I felt I didn't even have to sing—just walk around in the suit like a fashion show. During the break, I was turning around and showing it inside and out and saw people dashing to the stage taking pictures."

As fancy as his suits and guitars make him feel whenever he photographs them for one of his books, being able to get gussied-up and perform onstage will always be his greatest high. "It's about being with the fans and seeing how much they love you back and feeling and looking the part of a star—that's the part I'll always love the most," Yasuda says. "There's still nothing better than that."

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

Blu Prepares for Battle

The rapper fights personal, political demons on new album

BY M.T. RICHARDS

"Man, that is one of my favorite films," says John Barnes. The rapper better known as Blu is referring to *Killer of Sheep*, a 1977 tone poem about black working-class ennui in South Los Angeles. "I watch it all the time when I'm alone, dreaming of being raised in my parents' era. It is truly the only movie that depicts the Los Angeles I grew up in, so I have always respected Charles Burnett's stuff."

COURTESY OF BLU

Blu has never toiled in a slaughterhouse, and with his boyish good looks, he resembles a streetwear model more than the film's sooty-faced serfs. At 35, he is also a legend in underground hip-hop.

Yet in any discussion of Blu's music, the word *Everyman* gets bandied about almost reflexively. He emits a warm humility and, like Burnett, speaks for the struggling commoner who can't catch a break. It's been 11 years since his breakout album, *Below the Heavens*; produced by Exile, it was the first of Blu's gently polemic riffs. As the language of hip-hop becomes more laconic, many fans have recalibrated their expectations, but there is much demand for Blu's charged storytelling.

"The people made [*Below the Heavens*] what it is!" Blu says. "I still don't fully grasp it. I see it everywhere, and it's mind-boggling, but the reality of it all has not struck me."

Today, Blu continues mining the frustrations and infirmities of life in LA, as complicated a metropolis as any that exists in this country. "I believe we were given the king's chair, and it was taken before we could make it out the inauguration," Blu says. "We were on the verge of becoming a new LA that everyone dreamt it to be: peaceful, green, active and progressive. But the police started killing children all over America, and eventually that reached LA and tore us down as well."

Any time a young person dies in this manner, it seems to trigger a chorus of fretful murmurs about the state of modern policing. But Blu is apoplectic. His new album, *Gods In the Spirit, Titans In the Flesh*, is good-humored but aswarm with righteous invective. This has been gnawing at him since at least 2013, when he rapped about unlawful property seizures on "End of the World." Whatever piecemeal legal reforms have been introduced since then, they cannot temper Blu's fury with police departments large and small, as well as their Washington enablers.

Though Blu draws inspiration from turmoil personal and political, he would jump at the chance to have it some other, less painful way. "I hate it," Blu says flatly. "It destroys my music, it puts you in a position no one wants to be in. Everyone wants peace and happiness, and no one wants to have to fight purposelessly for it, either. It has almost completely changed the course of my music, from easy listening to rebellious war cries! It's awful, man. I want to rap about women on the beach."

The new album will stoke jealousy among rappers who aspire to tell stories but can't compete with Blu's flair for expository writing. It's also funky as a motherfucker. The credit for that goes to Nottz, a gifted local producer who, like Exile, can be as outré—or as conservative—as needed. In this case, his beats are full of arpeggiated tremble and trippy, squelching bass.

"Nottz and Exile are two of the most powerful wizards," Blu says. "They're the best at what they do, they're better than anyone who *tries* to do it.

"Working with Exile is like the 1800s, though," he continues. "With Nottz, it's like up picking beats at undisclosed locations in the forest."

Kind of a far cry from the slaughterhouse.

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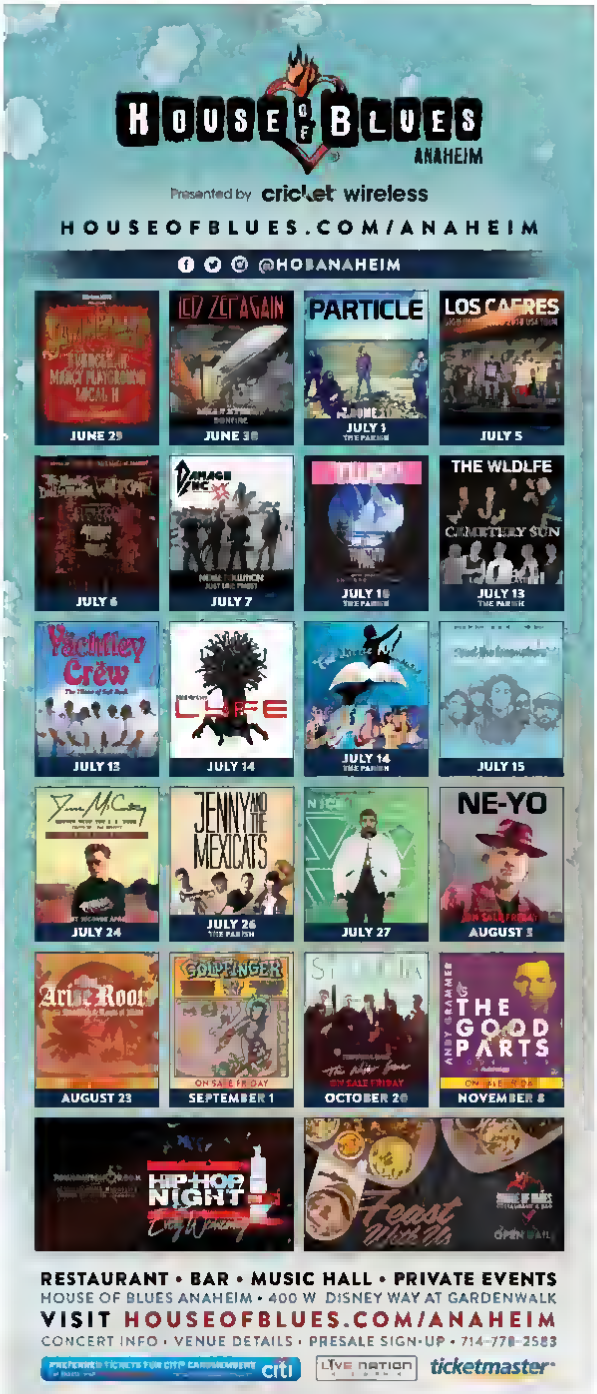

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concert guide»

TONJE THILESEN

Friday

BERLIN 9 p.m. $35. 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995. www.martysonnewport.com.

CODE RED RIOT, SLATER SLUMS 8 p.m., free. 21+. The Slidnbar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com

FEAR, STREET DOGS, LEFT ALONE, THE LAST GANG 8 p.m. $22. all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

THE HANGMEN, CORNFED PROJECT, DAVE STUCREN 8 p.m. $10. 21+. Gallaghers Pub & Grill, 300 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach; www.gallagharspubhb.com

HEO (P.E.), SLOKA, THE SUBJECTORS, SATANIC JOHNNY, EYE THE ENEMY 7 p.m. $18. 21+. Kerman Bar, 26022 Capn Dr., Laguna Niguel; www.thekarmanbar.com

JAMES SUPERCAVE, SLEEP RTATE, JURILO ORIVE 9 p.m. $12-$15. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

SUMMERLAND 6 p.m. $25. all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

Saturday

RANE'S WORLD, INNER WAVE, MICHAEL SEYER 8 p.m. $10. all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

BERLIN 9 p.m. $35. 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin. (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

THE CROWD, LOVE CANAL, REZERRERS 9 p.m. $10. 21+. Fitzgerald's Irish Pub, 19171 Magnolia St., Stn 12, Huntington Beach; www.fitzgeraldsirishpub.com

DAVID HILLYARD AND THE ROCKSTEADY 7, THE REVIVERS 8 p.m., free. 21+. The Slidnbar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. (714) 871-7469; www.slidnbarfullerton.com.

LEO ZEPAGAIN 8 p.m. $20. all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

SEGA GENECIOE 9 p.m. $5. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

Sunday

THA ALKAHOLIKS 9 p.m., $15, 21+. Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin. (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

HOMESAFE, HOT MULLIGAN, HEART ATTACK MAN, JETTY BONES, DIVE AT OAWN 7 p.m., $13-$15. all ages. Chain Reaction, 1652 Lincoln Ave., Anaheim. (714) 635-8067; www.allages.com.

PARTICLE 7 p.m., $15. all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

YOUNG DOLPH 8 p.m., $25. all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com

Monday

HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS 8 p.m., free. 21+. The Slidnbar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton. (714) 871-7469; www.slidnbarfullerton.com

Wednesday

PACIFIC SYMPHONY WITH BKASS TRANSIT SPECTACULAR: THE MUSIC OF CHICAGO 8 p.m., $25. all ages. Pacific Amphitheatre at the Orange County Fairgrounds, 100 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa. (714) 708-1500; www.pacamp.com

THE SUGAR 8 p.m., free. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com

Thursday, July 5

LOS CAFRES—RIGO CAMINANDO 2018—USA TOUR 7 p.m., $25.50. all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

TAPER JEAN GIRL (TRIBUTE TO THE KINGS OF LEON); UNDER COVERS OF OARKNESS 8 p.m., $5. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

Both & Baggage

When I started dating my husband, he told me he had a low libido. I said I could deal with that. We waited several months before having sex, and then after we started, it was infrequent and impersonal. There was some slow improvement over the three years we dated. Then we got married, and suddenly, he had no libido at all. He blamed health problems and assured me he was trying to address them. Despite being diagnosed and successfully treated for multiple physical and mental health issues over time, things only got worse. After four years of marriage, the relationship has become strictly platonic. I can't even start a conversation about intimacy without him getting irritated. After we married, he also decided he no longer wanted children, and I was actually convinced myself it was probably for the best, given his health. We built our dream home, adopted a pet and built an outwardly successful life together. I was not happy, at least complacent. Until I ran into an ex-boyfriend at a party. We split many years ago on good terms. We ended up talking about how important it is to him to have a biological child—something we talked about a lot when we were dating—and we got physically close, and that got me thinking about how much I missed sex with him. Ever since, I've been thinking about him. I think he was hinting that he wants me back, and right now, that sounds like the answer to all my problems. But if not, I don't want to leave my hubby and lose the decent life we built together. Plus, my leaving would hurt my husband's feelings, his health and his finances. I also worry that people would blame me because it will look like I left because things were tough. Can I follow up and clarify with my ex before I break it off with my husband, or is that too much like cheating? Is it selfish of me to even consider leaving at this point? I'm a 30-year-old woman, so I don't have a lot of time left to decide about children.

Indecisively Married Dame On Nearing Exit

Here's something I've never seen in my inbox: a letter from someone explaining how sex with their partner was infrequent, impersonal, uninspired, unimaginative, etc. at first, but—*holy moly*—the sex got a fuck of a lot better after the wedding! Now, maybe that happens—maybe that happened for you, dear reader (if so, please write in)—but I can't imagine it happens often. So, boys and girls and enbies, if the sex isn't good at or very near the beginning, the passage of time and/or muttering of vows isn't going to fix it. If sex is important to you—if you wouldn't be content in a companionate marriage and/or don't want to wind up in divorce court one day—hold out for someone with whom you click sexually.

Okay, IMOONE, either your husband married you under false pretenses—putting out in just enough to convince you to marry him and only pretending to want kids—or his good-faith efforts to resolve his health issues didn't help (at least where sex is concerned) and he changed his mind about being a dad (perhaps because he doesn't feel healthy enough to do the work of parenting). Either way, you're free to go. Even if the sex was good and your husband wanted 30 kids, you'd still be free to go.

Whether or not you stay, IMOONE, you should explore your options before making up your mind. So go ahead and call your ex and ask him if he'd like to get coffee with you—in a public place and shortly before an appointment you can't cancel. Your ex may have been hinting about wanting to get back together or he may not want to get back together and was engaged in what he thought was a little harmless, nostalgic flirtation—harmless because he knows you're married and presumably unavailable. There is only one way to find out what your ex wants or doesn't want, and that's by asking your ex. So ask.

And while that convo could be regarded as pre-cheating or cheating-prep or even cheating-adjacent, it isn't cheating. You married someone who unilaterally changed the terms and conditions of your marriage—no sex, no kids—and you have an absolute right to think through your options. And a husband who won't even discuss intimacy with you can't ask you to refrain from contemplating or even discussing intimacy with one of those options.

Whether you have that convo with your ex or not, IMOONE, you need to ask yourself if you want to stay in this marriage. You're only 30, and you wanted and still want kids. Ex-boyfriend or no ex-boyfriend, you can leave your husband—and you can leave him without abandoning him. You can still be there for him emotionally, you can offer what help you can financially, and you can help him secure health insurance.

Finally, IMOONE, you frame your choice as the husband or the ex—one or the other—but there is another option. It's the longest of long shots, I realize, but I'm going to toss it out there anyway: one or the other or *both*. Your husband would have to agree to an open relationship, and your ex-boyfriend—if, again, he's interested at all—would have to agree to it, too. Good luck.

You mean a letter about a gay man ("Sam") who has been sucking off his straight friend. Sam said he's never done this before, and isn't turned on by the idea of "servicing straight guys." I am a gay man who enjoys sucking off straight guys, and I wanted to share my perspective. I'm not trying to "convert" them. I simply find that straight guys have less emotional baggage than most gay guys. A guy's dick is his proudest possession. They like to have them admired, especially the straight guys who don't often get much feedback about their dicks from women. I'm very skilled, so it's a thrill for me to give a guy a lot of pleasure. I like doing things that make other folks happy, and sucking dick re-something that's appreciated. One gay I've known for about 20 years, and after many years apart, he is wanting to see me again. I don't want a relationship; I don't want to have to think about two people and have to adjust my plans. It's hard enough to plan for just me. I prefer the friendship and the occasional dick sucking. They can always trust me to be straightforward with them. I will never take advantage of them, even when they get drunk. I like pleasing them and having their trust. And for the big question everybody asks, "Do you get lonely?" No. I don't. I have all kinds of friends and lots of interests and hobbies. And from time to time, I get to suck a guy's dick.

Whatever Acronym Works

Like most gay guys, WAW, you've got some baggage there of your own. You don't want a relationship—and, hey, that's fine! Not everyone wants to pair or triple or quad off, and not everyone has to want that. But you're seeking out straight guys not because they have less baggage on average than gay guys (they don't), but because straight guys won't be interested in you romantically and, consequently, won't demand a commitment from you or ask you to prioritize their needs and feelings the way a boyfriend would. So it's not that you and all the straight guys you're sucking off are baggage-free, WAW; it's that your baggage fits so neatly inside theirs that you can momentarily forget you've got any at all.

On the Love cast (savagelovecast.com), is porn getting more and more violent? Contact Dan via email at mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org.

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Agua De Flor's Mango Agua Fresca

COURTESY OF AGUA DE FLOR

Summer is here! Even though it doesn't get as hot in OC as it does in the desert, the East Coast or Africa, it still gets pretty sweaty here. And when it's hot, smoking herb or eating a half-melted edible isn't exactly ideal. That's why we've loaded up our fridge with rows of cannabis drinks—particularly Agua De Flor's medicated mango agua fresca.

Another reason we're loading up on these optimal summertime spritzers (okay—lots of other edibles, too) is because July 1 marks the official cut-off date for dispensaries to carry *any* product containing over 100 milligrams of THC. In other words, medium- to high-dose edibles are going to become a memory of cannabis prohibitionist past in a little more than a week.

Agua De Flor uses 110 milligrams of THC per bottle, which means the company will have to readjust its dosage to be compliant. Law aside, everyone deserves to try an Agua De Flor—like, ASAP. They are sensational. The mango has been my go-to World Cup elixir. Each sip tastes akin to biting into mouthwatering tropical mango meat. Honestly, where has this product been all my life?

The thing with medicated drinks is they make you feel buoyant and can hit a bit quicker than regular edibles. And you can make microdose ice cubes from them to put into drinks or use them as a mixer for a delectable cross-fade cocktail.

Welcome to the summer of endless possibilities.

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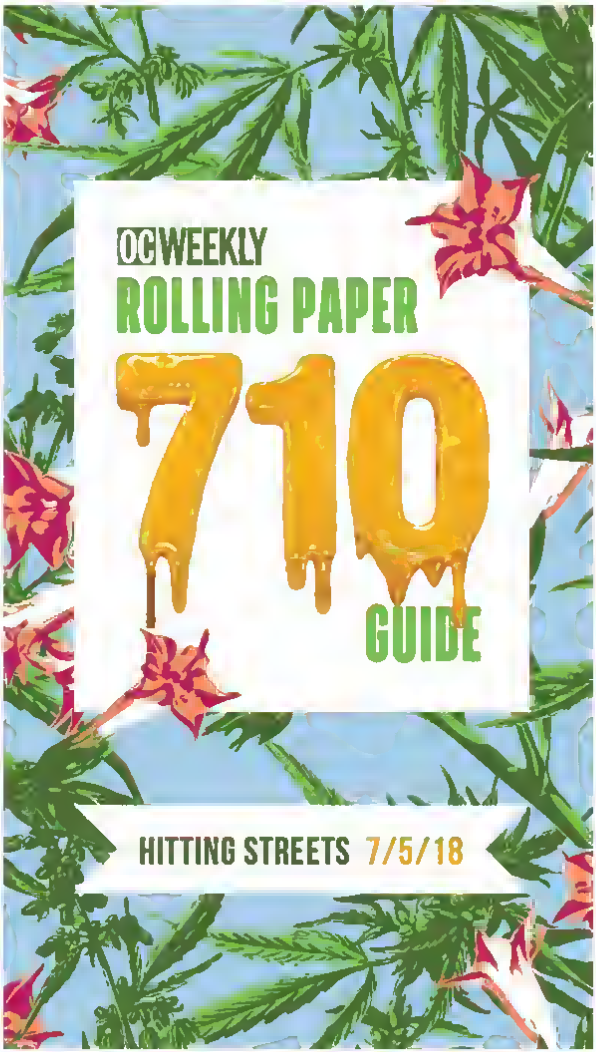
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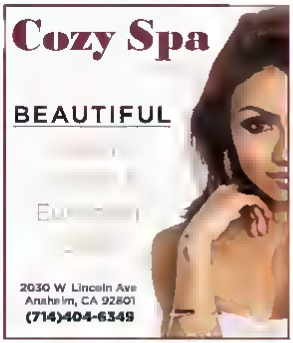

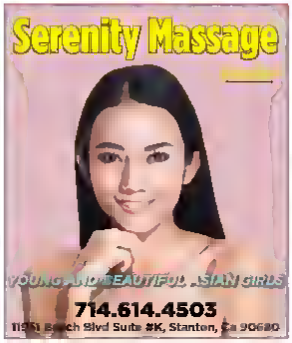

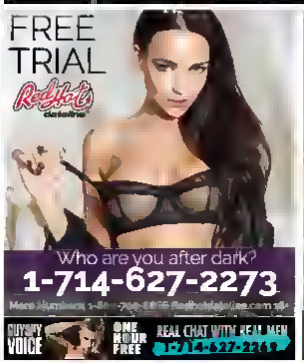

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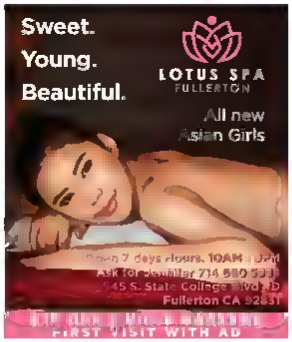

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Sweet Dita

Catching up with Orange County's favorite pin-up gal

BY TAYLOR HAMBY

"*Somewhere* in the archives," a satin-smooth voice of a woman on the other end of a San Francisco hotel phone line says, "there's a picture of a blond me inside this cage."

She estimates the photo would have been taken in the early 1990s—'91, '93 maybe. And it would have been used in the pages of this infernal rag as a promotion for an electronic music store, Disco 2000, "or something." She goes on to explain, "I'm with the long blond ponytail wrapped in Saran Wrap and electrical tape in a cage. It was a performance piece I used to do." Naturally.

Dita Von Teese has been doing performance pieces her whole career: the famous Shakespearean speech from *As You Like It* ("All the world's a stage . . .") rings true for the West Branch, Michigan–born and Irvine-raised performer.

She's been blond Heather Sweet fresh out of University High School in Irvine, bound and tied with Saran Wrap during the booming rave scene of the early 1990s or the retro pin-up stripper at the legendary Captain Cream's club in Lake Forest during the rockabilly revival of the '90s or the ebony-haired larger-than-life "International Queen of Burlesque" Dita Von Teese she's known as today. Whether performing a titillating striptease in her iconic oversized martini glass or riding a Swarovski-crystal-encrusted mechanical bull in custom-made Louboutin cowboy boots, the icon has undoubtedly played many parts.

"I got my start actually working in the L.A. electronic music scene," recalls Von Teese of the early days of her career—which blossomed while living in Orange County—as a go-go dancer in the Los Angeles rave scene.

By that time she was already dressing in vintage styles but had not yet incorporated it into her performance art. Then, she walked into a Lake Forest bikini bar with a boyfriend. "I was like, 'wow, this is really cool,'" she recalls. "These girls are making a lot of money, and they're not even taking anything off!"

She decided to try out at Captain Cream's, the now-shuttered South County strip club. Von Teese recalls the club, while divey, was renowned for having the most beautiful strippers in all of Southern California. It was on the stage of the neon-sign-lit Lake Forest bar that she first blended her love of vintage fashion, performing and sensuality, eventually embodying the allure of the burlesque dancers of the Silver Screen era.

STRIP, STRIP, HOORAY! ROSE APODACA

"I was kind of doing [burlesque] before I even knew what it was. And I was of course a very well-known pin-up and fetish model in the early '90s, so it was sort of like I was doing all of these different things, and it sort of evolved slowly but surely over the years, and became a legitimate career, little by little."

Von Teese says she's proud of her beginnings. "I did have a lot of people criticize me for coming from the strip-club world, especially when the neo-burlesque scene started really expanding in the early 2000s and late '90s, and people were kind of like, 'Well, she's a stripper . . .'"

"Hey, that is what we are all related to!" Von Teese retorts. "The word *stripper* was invented in the 1930s. It's a classic burlesque term, actually—and a really fun one. It sprang from that era."

She attests all her hours onstage at Captain Cream's and while headlining on tours of gentlemen's clubs around the country are not a blemish on her résumé, in fact, they've only enhanced her career in her eyes. "I don't have to think about trying to dance, I don't have to think about pointing my toes, I don't have to think about what makes someone sexy. I already know what it is, I learned it early on."

Von Teese spring-hoarded from Captain Cream's to the pages of *Playboy*, turning heads as the second coming of Bettie Page and a pioneer in the neo-burlesque movement.

"In the late '90s, I remember every time there would be an article in a magazine about burlesque, they would spotlight about 12 of us in the whole world," she recalls. That core group of women performers, unbeknownst to them, were paving the way for the burlesque revival, now a full-fledged international scene. When Von Teese began, there was almost nowhere other than strip clubs for her to perform burlesque. Now several venues such as the Copper Door in Santa Ana hold monthly burlesque revues for large crowds.

"It's really amazing to me to see the way that it's evolved, the way the audience has evolved into something so much bigger than I ever thought it could be," Dita remarks. "A lot of fans look to burlesque as something that's inspiring, and even empowering. We're in a moment where we don't have to compromise our sensuality, and sense of playfulness, erotic playfulness. We don't have to reconcile being a feminist and having all of that—we can have it all."

Von Teese and writer (and former OC Weekly!) Rose Apodaca co-wrote *Your Beauty Mark*, a 378-page venerable beauty bible where she spills her secrets and muses on fine aesthetics in all forms. The duo are excited to be working on a follow-up. "[*Your Beauty Mark*] is very much my theories about beauty and how I make vintage style more modern, and why I love it so much," she explains. "I'm doing something very similar to that book, with regard to personal style."

When Von Teese gets a moment to visit her old home county, she does so in her own way, which is to say, beautifully. She keeps her 1940 Buick LaSalle housed here so she can drive it around. This is where she fell in love with owning cars from the Deco era, after all. "Because there's no better roads to drive a vintage car on than those big wide-open Orange County roads."

And if it was still open, she'd drive that LaSalle straight to the legendary Sid's Steakhouse in Costa Mesa, but for now she wistfully waits for it to reopen, chewing on rumors of its revival instead of sirloin.

But one of her favorite things to do in Orange County is see her fellow vixen and dear friend Mamie Van Doren. "I just love to go and visit her whenever I have a chance and hear some stories and get some good advice from a glamour girl that has attained lots of wisdom along the way."

The last time Von Teese paid a call, she showed Van Doren a photo of her as a young woman, 19 years of age. Van Doren still remembered the day that photo was taken. "She said, 'I just want you to remember you will always feel like that young girl, no matter how old you are. You'll always feel like that young girl.'"

Dita pauses for a moment.

"And she's right—I still feel like that young Orange County girl."

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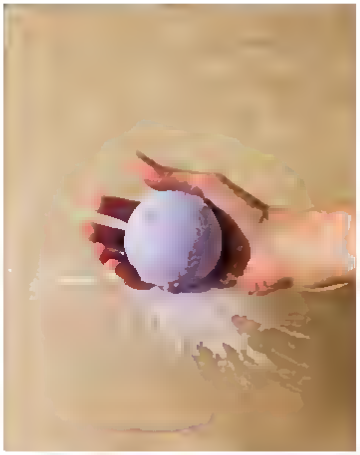

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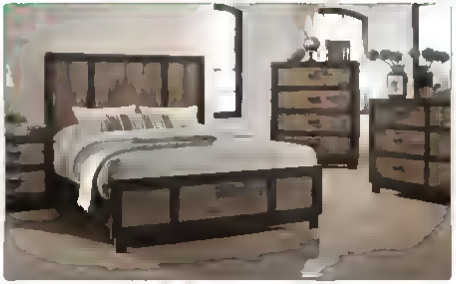

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